

Urban Design Committee

Annual Report 2013

The Urban Design Committee was established by ordinance in 1981 to advise city government on enhancing the physical environment of Lincoln. By Section 4.36 of the Lincoln Municipal Code, the Committee has seven appointed citizen members serving three year terms. The Committee meets as necessary on the second Wednesday of the month at 3 p.m. Fifteen meetings have been held in 2013, including three joint meetings with Historic Preservation Commission on West Haymarket topics and one special meeting. Committee members of 2013 include JoAnne Kissel (chair), Peter Hind, Gill Peace, Michelle Penn, Scott Sullivan, Michele Tilley, and Mary Anne Wells. At the end of the year, Peter Hind regrettably submitted his resignation.

West Haymarket Redevelopment

One of the Committee's major contributions in 2013 continued to be providing public input into design aspects of the West Haymarket redevelopment. In February, April, and July, the Committee met jointly with Historic Preservation Commission for presentations and feedback on arena parking garage façades, public streetscapes and wayfinding, and entertainment district boundaries.

Pedestrian Wayfinding Sign



*Proposed Parking
Decks along Arena Drive*



Project Oscar (Canopy & P Streets)

Another West Haymarket project, reviewed jointly with Historic Preservation Commission, was “Project Oscar”, a proposed office building for Olsson Associates at the southwest corner of Canopy and P Streets with a public plaza space. The Historic Preservation Commission reviewed the project based on its proximity to the Haymarket District and recommended approval. Because the project has city involvement through TIF and land acquisition, the Urban Design Committee made suggestions in its role as urban design advisor on public-private projects. The Committee raised concerns about the covered public plaza space at the northwest corner of the first floor, and concerns about how UDC advice is provided to interested stakeholders, and how to involve the Committee in a timely fashion. These issues led to improvements in communicating UDC advice directly to developers, city administration, and City Council. Construction on the project began in June. Revision of the plaza design was impeded by various complications and the Committee had not yet seen revised designs at the end of 2013.

*View from Canopy Street
Looking Southwest*



Another major contribution of the Committee was providing input for a number of public projects. Some of the projects were developed privately and financed in part by the city through TIF and land acquisition, as with Project Oscar above. Others were located on the city right-of-way or on other city property.

Student Housing Project (Antelope Valley Pkwy, Q to R Streets)

In January and February, the Committee continued to review designs for the joint public/private parking garage and student housing on Antelope Valley Parkway at Q-to-R Streets. The Committee made suggestions including strengthening the landscaping and pedestrian experience on Q Street and creating a more defined and welcoming principal entrance on R Street. This project is currently under construction and scheduled to be complete for the start of the 2014-2015 school year.



*View from Q
Street Looking
Northwest*

Lincoln Exchange (21st and N Streets)

In April, November, and December, members provided input on the Lincoln Exchange redevelopment south of N Street between 21st and Antelope Creek which includes a mixed-use commercial building and about 60 townhomes.



▲
*Birdseye of
Townhomes*



◀ *View from N
Street Looking
Southeast*

Block 68 (10th-11th, M-N Streets)

In October, November, and December, the Committee worked with developers of Block 68, the former Gold's parking block, on a mixed-use student housing project with an underground parking deck, first-floor retail, and 5 floors of residential units. Members reviewed designs because of the public involvement through TIF and land acquisition, and also advised on waivers to Downtown Design Standards. Although the first designs submitted for review were very conceptual, the Committee was appreciative that their advice was sought at an early stage.



Hartley Flats (27th and S Streets)

In November and December, a TIF housing project on North 27th Street, Hartley Flats, was reviewed, revised, and approved by the Committee.



Piedmont Center Redevelopment

In December, the Committee reviewed redevelopment of the Piedmont commercial center near 50th Street and South Cotner Boulevard. TIF will be used for façade improvements at the center. The Committee offered suggestions for a less generic design incorporating the original design of the building. This project will be brought back to the Committee in 2014.

*View from
Cotner Blvd ►
Looking West*



P Street Retail Streetscape (P Street, 11th to Centennial Mall)

In February, the Committee reviewed designs for the P Street retail streetscape, an element of the 2005 Downtown Master Plan. Construction on P Street began in the fall.

*P Street Construction,
Fall 2013 ►*



*P Street Retail
◄ Streetscape
Proposed Design*

Public Buildings

In April, August, and November, the members reviewed and approved designs for an indoor shooting range at Boosalis Park, a public gardens maintenance building at Antelope Park, and a wastewater pump station on West P Street, respectively.

Indoor Shooting Range



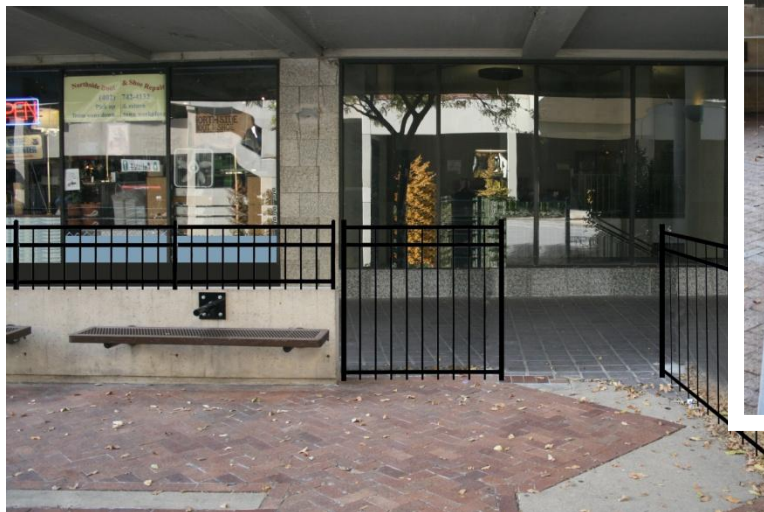
P Street Pump Station



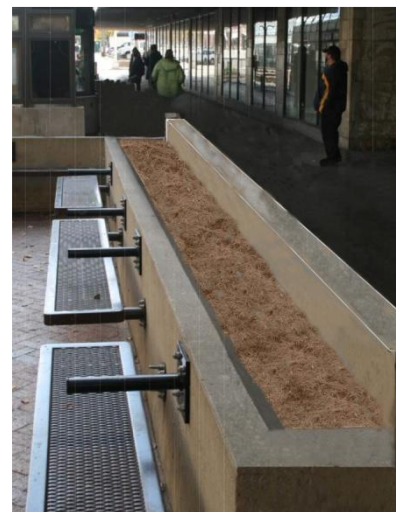
StarTran Bus Stop (11th & N Streets)

The Committee offered suggestions for improvements to a fence installation proposed for the 11th and N bus stop. In August, the preliminary proposal included a wrought iron fence replacing the existing chain link. Responding to the Committee's input, a modified wrought iron fence (Option A) was presented at the November meeting along with a second option for a concrete wall with integral planter (Option B). Members voted to approve the option for the wrought iron fence with hopes that a full service transit center is in the future.

Option A



Option B



LES Substation Screening (8th & N Streets)

In August, members reviewed and approved screening of the LES Substation at the northwest corner of 8th and N Streets. The proposed screen will consist of a precast wall system with landscaping, replacing the existing chain link fence. The committee also reviewed a preliminary concept for screening at the 21st and N substation and offered suggestions for improvements.

*View from N Street
Looking Northeast* ▶



Other projects reviewed by the Committee in 2013 included nearly a dozen sidewalk cafes both in the West Haymarket redevelopment area and in “traditional downtown,” and several vendor carts. The Committee also received updates on the West Cornhusker and Interstate 180 entryway corridor enhancement designs. A “street art” project near Eastridge Elementary School was reviewed and accepted, but was subsequently withdrawn.



◀ *Approved Sidewalk
Café at Civic Plaza*